

**Steve Daley**

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune p1, Sec 2
Date 1 OCT 87

STAT

A highly classified tale of salesmanship

It could be said of former CIA director William Casey that the death of a public figure seldom has been of more use to more people.

Casey died May 6, the day before the start of public congressional hearings into the Iran-contra affair, the hearings that became the private reserve of Casey's protegee in the National Security Council, Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Now it is reported that some time after Jan. 21, 1987, Casey gave a deathbed interview to Bob Woodward of the Washington Post, and Watergate legend.

That interview, in which Casey is said to have acknowledged his role in the diversion of Iranian arms sales monies to the Nicaraguan contras, is perhaps the most compelling and controversial moment in Woodward's celebrated new book, "Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987."

The marketing of "Veil" is almost as interesting, and nearly as Byzantine, as the machinations inside Mr. Casey's agency. As rights to the excerpts were purchased and galleys of the book were being leaked, the press, always subject to manipulation, began to manipulate itself.

It started with a full-page advertisement by the Washington Post Writers Group in the Sept. 5 edition of Editor & Publisher, a newspaper trade journal. The newspaper syndicate's ad heralded Woodward's new book, offering "six-part, first-serial" rights with a Sept. 27 starting date.

The Washington Post, where Woodward is an assistant managing editor with a remarkable degree of autonomy, was in a position to make sure it had the corner on any news broken in "Veil." And Newsweek, owned by the Washington Post Co., was in a similar position, ready to go in the Oct. 5 edition, on the street last Monday.

The book excerpts were being handled by Al Leeds, sales manager for the Washington Post Writers Group. Numbers as high as \$10,000 were being tossed about for newspaper serialization. But, last Friday, the equation changed.

"We got word that U.S. News & World Report had galleys of the book and were preparing a story around them," Leeds said Tuesday. "We had to figure out a way to recover, and to move up the schedule of excerpts we were offering papers."

In the end, 46 newspapers, including The Chicago Tribune, ran excerpts of the Woodward book in Sunday editions. Other papers, including the Chicago Sun-Times, spun reaction stories off a piece written by the Washington Post's Haynes Johnson.

Johnson's story, which was moved up to Saturday after the Post learned that U.S. News had the galleys, sketched what could be found in the six excerpts being peddled—the last interview at Georgetown Hospital, Casey's negative view of Ronald Reagan's work habits and the 1985 CIA-sponsored assassination attempt of a Hezbollah leader in Beirut that failed but in which 80 other people were killed.

"Sending the Johnson story out Friday night for the Saturday papers was one way we could service our clients," said Leeds. "As it was, a lot of papers couldn't accommodate the change in the excerpts being offered Sunday because of space problems."

The leakage at U.S. News, while creating some logistical problems for the Post's marketing entity, fueled the furor over Woodward's revelations. And Washington Post executive editor Benjamin Bradlee made a few phone calls last Friday, prodding some fellow editors around the country who had yet to commit to the Woodward excerpts. News, he promised, albeit six-months-old and heretofore unpublished news at his newspaper.

If all that weren't enough, it seems this story comes with a measure of genuine Federal City intrigue. Consider, possibly for the movie package, two other elements in the "Veil" saga:

Mel Elfin, who wrote the U.S. News story built around the leaked Woodward galleys, spent 20 years as Washington bureau chief of Newsweek.

Even better for conspiracy theorists, U.S. News editor David Gergen served in the Nixon White House and has spent a segment of his public life denying that he was "Deep Throat," the ever-so-secret source used by Woodward and his colleague Carl Bernstein throughout Watergate.

Did someone at Newsweek give Elfin the galleys? Did Gergen call in a chit, all in the interest of the greatest good for the greatest number? Gergen denies that he got the Woodward manuscript.

On Sunday, CBS' "60 Minutes" was ready with a Woodward interview in which he spelled out the highlights of his book and responded to a charge by Casey's wife, Sophia, that the hospital interview never happened.

"CIA security isn't much," Woodward opined.

"Your security is better," said Mike Wallace.

Woodward smiled for the cameras. Of such moments are newspaper legends continued, and books sold.